

Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

DDI- 028957-86CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

16 June 1986

Qadhafi's Shaky Domestic Position

Summary

Libyan leader Qadhafi remains shaken by the US airstrike last April. The US attack has aggravated his unprecedented political problems by humiliating the Libyan armed forces and indirectly stimulating closer cooperation between Washington and West European governments to isolate his regime. Qadhafi's security forces, however, remain loyal and effective enough to protect him from all but the best-organized and skillfully implemented plots. [REDACTED]

25X1

* * * * *

Impact of the US Attack

Domestic reactions to the US airstrike last April confirm Qadhafi's unprecedented political problems.

- Press reports indicate that the funeral procession in Tripoli for those killed in the attack attracted only several thousand marchers out of a local population of about 900,000.

[REDACTED] pro-Qadhafi demonstrations--highly publicized by the Libyan media--have been stage managed by his radical supporters.

25X1

- [REDACTED] popular criticism of Qadhafi has become more open since the US strike.

25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] the Maghreb Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 16 June 1986 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be addressed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

-- [redacted] anti-Qadhafi graffiti recently appeared in Tripoli and Banghazi for the first time this year. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Washington's humiliation of the Libyan military--Libyan forces proved unable to defend Qadhafi even at his best protected residence--strengthens the political climate in Libyan that was already conducive to plotting.

25X1

Qadhafi's failure to attract significant foreign support for his anti-US posture adds to his domestic vulnerabilities.

-- Recent expulsions of Libyans involved in terrorist activities by West European governments and limits on the official Libyan presence contradict Qadhafi's claims of widespread international support and US isolation, as well as his denials of terrorist involvement.

-- [redacted] Libyans are relying on the VOA and BBC for accurate information because they recognize that the regime is disinforming them.

25X1

-- In our view, Qadhafi's failure to convene an extraordinary Arab League Summit has further undermined Qadhafi's attempts to persuade Libyans of US blame for the confrontation. [redacted]

25X1

Regime Countermeasures

Although the US airstrike has weakened Qadhafi's grip on power, his extensive security precautions and the continuing loyalty of his security services protect him from all but the best-organized and skillfully implemented plots.

25X1

-- We have no indication that the US attack has weakened the morale of either the Jamahiriya Guard--his principal

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

coup protection force--or other domestic security elements. [redacted]

25X1

In addition, Qadhafi apparently has been given a limited psychological lift by a recent Soviet commitment to strengthen the Libyan military capabilities against potential US attacks.

- In our view, Qadhafi's renewed approaches to the Soviets--highlighted by Libyan number two man Jallud's visit to Moscow last month--probably are intended in part to help shore up his domestic position.
- The Libyan leader may regard increased Soviet military assistance as a prerequisite for undercutting dissent in the officer corps and rebuilding his international prestige.
- Qadhafi might also perceive a major arms purchase as a means to revive traditional West European concerns over closer ties between Tripoli and Moscow and undermine the current Allied effort to isolate the Libyan regime.
- The favorable Soviet response has increased Qadhafi's confidence enough to reassert his control over day-to-day developments, thereby discouraging at least some potential plotters. [redacted]

25X1

Nevertheless, the cancellation by Qadhafi of his public appearance on 11 June--a national holiday commemorating the 1970 withdrawal of US forces from Libya--demonstrates the considerable pressure he is under.

- Qadhafi almost certainly decided on a televised appearance because he fears assassination if he appears publicly.

[redacted]

25X6

25X1